

**Unity Economic Development Committee
January 3rd Minutes (Approved)**

Note: Decisions and commitments made in ***bold italic***.

Present: Mary Ann Hayes, Mary Leaming, Jenny deHart, Ellen Batchelder, Kari Hulva, Lucia Picard, Mike Gold, Jim Buckle, Alicyn Smart (late), Gail Chase, Najean Shedyak, Tony Avila (Late)

Excused: Jon Wadick, Larry King

Absent:

Guests: Zoey Bond, Emily Newell, Penny Sampson, Dan McCormick

ITEM 1: REVIEW AND VOTE ON NOV 6 2017 REVISED AND DEC 4 2017 MINUTES

Motion to accept Nov 6 revised minutes from Lucia, Mike 2nd – 9 in favor with 1 abstention

Motion to approve Dec 4th minutes from Mary, Gail 2nd - with amendment from Jim B. to correct appropriations number (from \$52 to \$52K) – 9 in favor, 1 abstention

ITEM 2: BYLAW REVISIONS

Want to avoid bias and conflict of interest while recognizing the interconnected nature of small towns in the EDC's work to provide access to and recommendations on grant \$ and other programs.

Guidance from MMA (A "standard" source of guidance): conflict of interest = Direct or indirect pecuniary interest (10% or more ownership in affected entity or thousands of dollars worth). Also, consider bias (personal feelings about the project or person) as well as "familial prejudice" – benefit to family (either through blood or affinity up to 2nd cousin).

Proposed EDC Bylaw Changes: (in red below)

"Program Access: The Committee shall broadly publicize all opportunities to apply for available financial assistance or otherwise participate in programs under its jurisdiction. Procedures shall be clearly outlined and user friendly. Members may assist applicants in accessing EDC programs, including the preparation of grant and loan applications, provided no conflict of interest exists (as defined below).

Conflict of Interest: Prior to voting on a pertinent matter, members shall disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary (10% or more interest in business affected as an officer director, partner, associate, employee or stockholder), familial or other prejudicial conflict of interest that may influence their opinion. To protect the integrity of the process, members shall recuse themselves from voting on matters in which they have a pecuniary interest or other clear bias preventing objective judgement. Should there be a difference of opinion about whether a member must recuse him/herself, the question shall be resolved by majority vote of the other members present and voting."

Mary- suggests adding language " The EDC adheres to the legal interpretations and recommendations of the Maine Municipal Association regarding conflict of interest. As such,"

Motion to amend by laws with the suggested additional language – 1st by Jenny d, 2nd by Mary L – 10 in favor, 1 abstention

ITEM 3: COMMITTEE REPORTS

RLF: another deadline for applications has come and gone, no new applications- current application is still proceeding. Process needs to be revised – perhaps to relax criteria and make these funds easier to access. Also, need to confirm current RLF committee membership. Waiting for tax info from current applicant to complete review, who perhaps is waiting til year-end to get that done.

Marketing: Heard a presentation from Experience Western Waldo, a new company that could provide for our website needs, looked at street plans for lighting updates, and developed some budget numbers for these projects.

Maker's Space: Finding an affordable policy and liability has been a hold up due in part to the as yet to be defined nature/non-standard nature of the entity. Possibilities for this to use space at McKay Farm and become a “project” of Unity College. JimB suggests contacting Allen Insurance who may have some experience with this.

Lakes and Trails: Was pursuing Rails to Trails or Rails with Trails concept but seems a tough sell with DOT.

ITEM 4: LODGING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mary put a draft RFP together and has incorporated some feedback from community members (Barry McCormack, Emily Newell, etc.)

Interested EDC members can review online and offer edits by Monday Jan 8th. Mary will request to be on next Selectmen's Meeting agenda.

ITEM 5: 2018 BUDGET ALLOCATIONS – 2nd viewing with updated numbers.

Sidewalk Repair: (Mary Ann Hayes) Money already appropriated for sidewalk repair in TIF District but projects that were specifically proposed came in under budget. Can selectmen use remaining \$ for other sidewalk projects or should the \$ be re-appropriated? Unlike other government funds, TIF account can be “rolled over” to hold funds for future years rather than sweep the account. Selectmen likely have the authority to spend on other sidewalk repairs in TIF District but it may be wise to bring this up at town meeting to inform citizens and get approval for how and where they propose spending the remaining funds.

Firehouse paving: (Emily Newell) – \$7K – updated conservative estimate for front and back rugged base layer plus surface layer = \$40K. Request for TIF Funds is 17.5% (this ask is based on volume of in-TIF district calls/ responses 2015-2017). Front is priority, both would be great. Rationale- the paving is “necessitated by the district,” and that the fire service protects TIF district property. It will allow for hose and truck washing and drying necessary to maintain that equipment. Remaining \$ will be requested from the town through general funds.

Note: 1/3 of this year's appropriations of TIF funding going to fire department- how much of this is a clear Economic development project?

Firetruck Reserve: (Mary Ann Hayes) – \$10K – Unity has a “grandfathered” tradition to send \$10,000 per year to firetruck reserve fund. Currently the fund has \$58K in it. Older firetruck is from the 1980's. Will have to be purchased before TIF District ends in 2025.

RLF: (Kari Hulva) Keep current \$50k in fund, reallocate \$5K. Argues to allocate more now and in the future. Rationale: if the current \$ are spent down, would need to wait another year to allocate more. Also, a funded RFL fund could extend longer than the TIF district contract. On the other hand, there have been few applications to date. The need for an RLF has not yet materialized and EDC could recommend more allocations in future years nearer to end of TIF district.

Community Grant Program: - \$5K - same amount appropriated in 2017 (no new request). This program hasn't yet received any applications. It may need advertising

Electric Event Sign: (Larry King) – \$12K – rationale has been explored in previous meetings.

Marketing: (Jenny deHart) – \$5K – for 1st year website development at premium level with Explore Western Waldo for single entry point website to include municipality and tourism info. (Note: will require \$1500/yr. maintenance in the future)

Zoey B (from Explore Western Waldo) suggests 10% of their work will be linked to migrating government info (which is not covered through TIF funds). Town will be asked to contribute 10% from General Funds to migrate and maintain government functions in addition to 500-1K for buying and holding domain names.

Horseshow Ring: (Penny Sampson) – \$6K – 1) fencing, gravel, wood to turn horseshow ring area to a trailhead hub for snowmobiling (connects 3 snowmobile trails), canoeing and horse trail, as well as 2) improvement to ring itself to encourage more horse shows, and 3) create an outdoor ice rink for winter use

Projects related to development of a trail head are obviously covered by TIF funding. However, details remain to be worked out – EDC could recommend a larger amount for general trail work with the understanding that some would be used for trailhead development at that location when a firm plan and budget are presented.

Horse Ring is out of the TIF district – TIF funding out of district must be necessitated by the district. We can argue that we want to create a place that brings in people. The district “necessitates” a working ring to draw in these people. Horse Ring contributes to a multi layered economic driver. MMA legal advisor Becky Seel (reported via Penny S.) – TIF omnibus section C has broad language which could cover the ability to use a horse show ring as a draw for business. But omnibus refers to a table of uses which does not seem to cover this type of project. An idea to properly use TIF funds to support horse show ring improvements is for the town to grant a loan to business entity for horse show ring improvements. Or as non-profit could apply for a community grant. Town should have lease agreement with group to make improvements on town property.

Wayfinder and Business Directional Signs Cost-Share Program: (Penny Sampson) – \$3K – for 10 businesses + 5 other wayfinder signs such as for Kanokolus. Application process to be determined.

Streetscape/Lighting/Signage: (Jenny deHart) – \$10K – for an architectural design and plan. Hire consultant for a Lighting plan to improve and make lighting/streetscape/signage more consistent in look and function. Look and function should serve to help attract people to downtown areas. New lighting could also save \$ long term if we own lights rather than rent them and move to LED/ solar power, for example.

KVCOG dues: (Mary Ann Hayes) – \$2.73 K – is allowed from TIF funds and has been funded in the past.

Traffic Calming: (Mary Leaming and others) – \$4K – 1) hire a professional for digging out, redesigning and replanting of traffic calming neck-downs near to Field of Dreams. 2) Cover more frequent police details. 3) Pay for someone to help move expected state-provided speed signs 4) Pedestrian signs, street striping.

Gen Admin: \$2.5K - Legal Advice, Misc.

EDC Recommendations: All projects are supported with the exception of the contribution towards firehouse paving. See draft Excel data sheet below for EDC recommendations regarding previously appropriated funds, funds EDC recommends for reappropriations, and requests for new appropriations.

TIF Appropriations				2018 TIF Budget Proposal - Working Draft for 1-3-18			
Meeting Date	Total	Remainder	Purpose	Amount	Purpose	Remainder	Town Meeting Vote Needed
March-14	\$22,000	\$0	professional serv., fire truck			\$0	
July-14	\$15,000	\$0	Branding, signage, website, lodging, UBX			\$0	
March-15	\$23,386	\$2,581	professional serv., fire truck	\$2,581	Lodging Feasibility Study	\$0	
January-16	\$55,000	\$55,000	Business retention & growth, esp. RLF, also marketing & alternative	\$50,000	RLF	\$0	NO
				\$5,000	Lodging Feasibility Study		
March-16	\$35,000	\$20,513	prof, admin, consult, marketing, traffic calming	\$3,094	Traffic Calming (contractor for neck-downs + sign mng	\$0	NO
				\$10,000	Marketing Grant Program		
				\$7,419	Lodging Feasibility Study		
September-16	\$50,100	\$20,196	sidewalks, fire apparatus, kanokolus	\$20,196	Keep for sidewalks - after town discussion	\$0	YES
March-17	\$17,730	\$5,000	Fire apparatus, KVCOG & Grant	\$5,000	Community Grant Program	\$0	NO
March-18	\$56,000			\$12,000	Electronic Event Sign		
				\$10,000	Streetscape Lighting/Signage Plan		
				\$10,000	Propose reallocation to Fire Truck Reserve Fund		
				\$10,000	Propose reallocation to trailhead development outside the district		
				\$3,000	Business Directional Sign Cost Share (program)		
				\$5,000	Destination Web Site		
				\$1,000	Traffic Calming		
				\$5,000	KVCOG dues, general admin		
Total	\$218,216	\$103,290					
				\$159,290	TOTAL	\$0	APPROPRIATED BUT UNALLOCATED
					ALREADY APPROPRIATED	\$52,651	2017 UNAPPROPRIATED
				\$20,196	REQUIRES REAPPROPRIATION	\$77,000	2018 ANTICIPATED
				\$56,000	REQUIRES NEW APPROPRIATION	\$56,000	
						\$73,651	AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE

ITEM 6: It was determined that no extra meeting would be required to meet town meeting preparation schedule. Will develop annual report at February 5 meeting.

ITEM 7. ADJOURN 8:45 PM.